Bedel (H.)

A Sermon exhortyng to pitie the poore.

Preached the. 25. of Nouember Anno. 1571. at Christes Churche in London,

By Henry Bedell Vicar there, which treatise maye well be called

THE MOVTH of the poore.

¶ Imprinted at London by Iohn Awdely.

4

To the Christian Reader.

WHere as some for the trial of their wyttes, and proofe of knowledge, are mooued to pen their studies & trauels, which they do most exquisitely, and others for the benefit of their country, some time of their own labours set forth bookes, and some of other mens workes in our mother toung do open the meanyng, and all I trust to Gods glory, and the furtherance of knowledge: Euen so I, not of my selfe moued, by any worthynes I know in my selfe, neither to purchase prayse of men (for thys my dede is nothing praise worthy to me, for if ought be fauty, that is to me due, and if any thing be to purpose, that was & is Gods worke in me) haue laboured as farre as memorie might reache, neither addyng nor deminishing to or from the woordes I spake in the pulpet, to write and pen somwhat for the help of the poore. VVhich the rather I haue done, for that then I was requyred by my friend so to do. VVhich purpose or sum of matter, though of an other it might be more excellently done, then of me it is in this treatise done: yet thinking that all men wyl con-

sider my good hart and well meaning to the poore, it made me the more bolde to enterprise this matter, to further their poore estate that want, and so to put in print those rude wordes that then by preaching I spake.

And thus hoping that all men wyll accept my sylly good wyll in this my labour, vnto which I may speake as Ouid did, Vade sed in cultus, I leaue the succes vnto God of this paynes I haue taken, as wel touching my selfe, as also for the poore for whom I haue spoken.

H. B.

¶ A Sermon preached in Christes Hospitall at London.

PSALME XLI.

Blessed is he that considereth the poore and needy, the Lord shall deliuer hym in the tyme of trouble.



FOr as muche as God hath placed hys Children here in thys worlde for the triall of their patience, and proofe of fayth: and for thys cause hath mixed the poore with the ritch, placing some in pouerty, not that he could not make them ritch, but geuing them pouerty to trye their pacience, & enriching other some, not that they should trust in their ritches, as by hys Prophet he saith: If ritches ryse, set not thy hart theron, Psal. lxij
but geuyng them ritches to try their fayth, whether they wyll serue God through and by faith that woorketh by loue, or els serue Mammon, by keping of him in secret, knowing also the iustifiyng faith as S. Paule sayth, Mayth. vj
is that that woorketh by loue. Which loue is Galat. v.
especially expressed in ministring to the necessity of the Saints, and our poore brethren, Rom. xij
as the same Paule affirmeth. Therefore al-

so doth Dauid, for his part by these wordes as much as he can, trauel to bring vs to that purpose of faith, to shew our loue to the poore, when in these wordes he saith: Blessed is he that considereth the poore and the needy.

Mat. vij. As the tree is knowen to be good or bad by none other waies then by his fruites: so the faithful, not by his wordes, but by his exercises is knowen, in beleuing and woorkyng the thinges that belong to faith. Therefore our Sauiour saith: Not al that say Lord, but Mat. vij. they that do the wyll of my Father, who willeth amongst many thinges that this should be one, namely to consider the poore and the needy. For as the vnsauery salt that leeseth Mark. ix. his saltnes, is not fyt to season, but to be cast as reprobate and nought in the bye wayes, to be trode vnder foote: so is that faith dead, that hath no exercises in the way of loue, to remẽber the poore, as Iames saith: Faith if it Iacob. ij. haue not her exercises in her self, she is dead.

I speake not this, as if a man should suppose, that he that wanting faith that teacheth to woorke, cannot be iustified, hauing the same faith now geuen, that hereafter would woorke, as we see in children that haue not wrought, yet iustified by faith that is lyuely in them, and would haue wrought if they had lyued.

As

As also in the theefe that neuer wrought, because he wanted that faith by which nowe he is iustified, whereby he would haue wrought if he had lyued. Therefore both faith onely tarrieth in them that are preuented, that they cannot worke according to the same, & therefore Grace maketh them free. But to others that haue time, and therein also the iustifying faith, they haue the frutes of the same.

Neither do I speake thus, as if God needed our workes or giftes, who geueth vnto vs first, and that with plenty, and casteth no man in the teeth, nor I speake not to the end that we should so worke, as to thinke our selues iustified therin, beyng as our Maister sayth, vnprofitable seruantes, when we haue done all we can do, geuing out nothing, but what we haue receaued, as S. Paule saith. But this exercise of faith to geue to the poore, is required of vs to satisfie our bounden dewtye, not for merite, but in dewty, because the poore are left amongst vs for this cause as Christ saith: Ye shall haue the poore alwaies with you. Which poore for vs, as the ritch for them are left, whereof S. Augustine saith: Propter diuites sunt pauperes, that is, the poore are for the ritch mans sake, which are to be consumed as poore and nedye, euen as Dauid doth

Luk. xvj

Iohn. xij.

De verbis domini ser. 26.

teach

teach vs well.

But to ariue to my purpose, these wordes of the Prophet contain two profitable notes: The first to teach vs to respect the poore and needy, as becommeth the faithfull. Secondly to consider the promise that is annexed thereto. And of these I wyl speake by Gods grace seuerally.

First, concernyng the respect and care for the poore, albe it that Dauid doth note it wel in this Psalme, yet to the better satisfying of so necessarye a deutye, that by the mouth of many witnesses we maye the more speedely be brought to the credite of the same, let vs beare the course of the scriptures, and learne our deuty forth of them.

How earnestlye doth God call vpon vs to remember the poore by his seruant Salomon, as we reade in the Prouerbes wher he saith: Pro. xiiij. He that despiseth his neyghbour, sinneth against his Maker, but he that hath pity on the poore, he shall be blessed. He would not haue vs hard harted agaynst the poore & our fellow seruauntes, to saye to them: Go thy way thou straunger, God send thee thou straunger meate, drinke and clothing as Syrache saith. Nor he would not haue vs to be disquieted with the crye of the poore, to stop our

our eares against them, and therefore sayth:
He that stoppeth his eare at the crye of the poore, shall cry him selfe and not be heard. Prou. 21.
Nor he suffreth vs not to be careles of their state, being at ease our selues, as that Glutton was mẽtioned in the Gospel, but as David his father willeth the poore to be considered, so he concludeth saying: The bread of the poore is in the wayes of the ritch, he that keepeth it from them is a man of bloud. Luk. 16. Eccle. 34.

Toby being a good instrument of God, and in this matter worthye to be beleued in hys counsell, who as he well considered the poore in feeding of the liuing, and burying the dead with his own labour and cost, so he teacheth others the same practise of duty whē he saith: Be mercyfull after thy power, if thou haue much, geue plenteously, if thou haue lyttle, do thy diligence gladly to geue of that lyttle. Tobi. 4.
For as God nedeth not the gift, but requireth the duty: so Toby, not for the quantitie of the gift to be wayed, but in the qualitye of the minde of him that geueth, teacheth vs to geue somewhat, be it little or much, euen as S. Ambrose also teacheth: Non solum queritur quantum datur, sed de quanto & quanto animo. That is: It is not onelye required how much is geuen, but out of how much and Ambro. in. 1 Cor.

with what mynde, not to be prayſed for the greatnes, in that we geue not ſo much as we
1. Cor. vij. receiued, for what geueſt thou that thou haſt not receaued? Nor for the aboundance, becauſe we haue more then nædeth, but for duty requiring the ſame, we muſt of neceſſitie geue. And therfore as in ſubſtance God hath bleſſed vs with the moſt, ſo we muſt ſtudy to geue the more, not that God is pleaſed with ſommes, as though therby we ſhould thinke our ſelues iuſtified, but to diſcharge our Stuardſhips of that we haue receiued, according to the ſaying of S. Paul writing to Timothe:
1. Tim. vi. Charge them that are ritch in this world that they be ready to geue and glad to diſtribute, laying vp in ſtore a good foūdation for them ſelues againſt the time to come, that thei may attaine eternall life. Vnto whoſe wordes we may fitly for our comfort and erudition ioyne
Eccle. vij. Syrache ſaying: Reach forth thy hand vnto the poore, that thy mercy and bleſſing may be made perfect.

Alſo the Prophet Eſay ſpeaking vnto vs in the word of the Lord amongſt many wholeſome and neceſſary leſſons forgetteth not to put vs in mynde of our duty to the poore, becauſe it is a pleaſant thing to the Lord, and a fruit of our faith, and a token of Chriſtiantie.

Thers-

Therefore first he saith: When thou seest a naked man, couer him, and see thou despise not thine own flesh. And after in the same place he saith: Breake thy bread vnto the hungry, and neuer turne thy face from any poore man, and so the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee. And againe a litle after in the same chapter he saith: See the needy and the straunger brought into thy house. Surely in deede howsoeuer wilful affection & vain pleasure leadeth vs, we ought not to be vnmindfull of our brethren the poore members of Christ, seing that besides our duty, euen our excesse would content their needs, & our waste serue their lacke. So that if at any time God hath geuen vnto vs abundantly, which we waste in superfluitie, that should be the portion of the poore. And for this cause we do not so, Basil chargeth vs with waste that we shal surely answer. He saith: Nonne spoliator es qui dispensanda suscepisti tanquā propria reputādo? Est enim panis famelici quem tu tenes, nudi tunica quem in cōclaui reseras, discalciati calcei qui penes te marcescunt, indigentis aurum quod tu possides in humanū. That is to say: Art not thou a spoyler in taking to dispence an other mans substaunce, and then to reckon it as thine owne? For it is Glat. 16 vers.

the bread of the hungry which thou retaynest, the coate of the naked that thou lockest in thy wardrope, the shoes of the barefoote that lye mowldyng and dryeng by thee, the nædyes gold that lyeth cankred and buried by thee. Which sentence of Basill, as it teacheth the liberalitie that is due for the poore, so it blameth the careles that accompt all to be their owne keping to them selues more then sufficient. That at the last day the Mite in the purse, the Mothes in the garments, and the rust in the gold maye create them lyke cankers, as Iames doth protest.

Iacob. v.

Therefore the hard harted ritch that respect not the poore, and yet wyll be accompted the louers of God, are reproued by the Apostle S. Iohn, who saith: He that hath this worldes ritches, and seeth his brother to haue neede, and yet shutteth vp the bowels of mercy frō him, how doth the loue of God dwel in him? And therefore they that bragge of the loue of God, whō they neuer saw with bodely eyes, let them shew some compassion to the nædy members of Christ, whom dayly they se. Otherwise such careles may boast of Christianitie, but the fruites therof he hath not. He may brag of faith, but he wanteth that which worketh by loue. For the amendemēt wher-

1 Ioh. iij.

of

of let all that haue and may well ſpare, not reſpecting their fanſies, but conſidering their duty, harken to the wordes of Syrache: Let euery man deale according to compaſſion and mercy with his brother. For be it knowen to all, that as to ſteale from them that rightly poſſes their goodes, is criminall, and a matter gilty before God, reputed to be ſynne: ſo is it no leſſe but equal ſyane, to kepe from them that lacke, being poore and nedy, as Ambroſe ſaith well: Non minoris eſt criminis habenti tollere, quam cum poſsis indigentibus denegare. It is no leſſe ſynne (ſaith he) to take from him that rightly poſſeſſeth, then not to geue to him that lacketh, when thou art able. For the right riche man that dulye deſerueth that name, is not knowen by his poſſeſſion, his gorgeous fare and coſtly houſe, his great palace, his Jewels and gold, but by conſidering the poore and nedy, wherof S. Auguſtine ſaith thus: Diuites aliorum paupertate probantur. That is to ſay: the riche are proued by the pouerty of others. So that ſtyll and alwaies the Scriptures & Fathers preſcribe not an indifferencie, but a neceſſitie, not at pleaſure, but vpon dutys, that the poore and nedy ſhould be conſidered.

Eccl. 4.

Auguſt. homelia 15.

Where is that large liberalitie that in our

Fathers

Fathers was sene much, though to an euyll purpose then applied, as therby seeking their saluation, may now be bestowed to a better vse, that is, to foster and fede the poore members of Christ. The world is great, as euer it was, the people as ritch, but not so liberall, our knowledge more, but in this poynt we be wylful ignorant. For loke what wastfully our Fathers as fooles did lay forth and bestow vpon shameles Friers that neuer were full, and fat bellyed Monkes whose bellyes were their gods, that now our Nigards can not lay foorth, distrustyng their states, least they should beg (say they) before we dye, distrustyng the prouidence of God, that bleseth their store. Whereas in dede as Seneca saith, Nemo tam pauper viuit, quã nascitur et moritur. That is: No man lyueth so poore, as he is borne, and shall dye. The extorcioner can spare nought to the poore, for toyuyng house to house, with a curse to the same, as they say, doing no good to the poore, except it be to cast them forth a doores. The pride of apparel maketh vs forget the patched poore, and our dainty soft lodgyng, their hard couches and straw.

Seneca de iudicijs.

Where is the plentye of gold that garnished the ceremonious church, the siluer & iewels

that

that so largelye was geuen forth to stockes & stones, the cloth that cloathed the Pylgrime god that felt no colde, the stocke that bought the candels to set before them, that had eyes, and yet saw nought? Were ye so plentifull about such pelfe, and will ye geue nothing to poore Jesus Christ. Well, ye make a scorne of the poore and nedy, the poore now perisheth by the ritch, and no man considereth it. Is this the life of Christians? Is this the fruite of our Gospell? Is this the mercye that we learne by the worde?

Well then awake from your slæpy securitie, consider your duties towardes the poore, stretch forth your niggard handes that pressed downe your mucke, and harken to Syrache, who lyke a good Father teacheth thæ as his sonne saying: My sonne, suffer not the poore to want the thynges necessary for to sustaine hys lyfe, and be not thou hard against the poore. Contemne not the hungry, & greue not the poore in his pouerty. Adde not affliction to the afflicted in hart, and deferre not to confer thy benefite on the poore. Refuse not the voyce of the selly and simple, and turne not thy face from the poore. Cast not thyne eye from the miserable, least hee haue cause to accuse thee. Eccle. 4.

Thus

Thus at length doth Syrache counsell, but we are negligent to heare the same. Heare we may, but our credite thereto is small.

Then cõsider, as the benefit is great wherewith God recompenceth the mercyfull, so is the iustice very sharpe in condempnyng the hard harted, as in that conclusion the same Syrache saith: For if thou be careles of the poore, faint and needy poore that calleth on thee, he that made him shall heare his praier whē with a troubled hart he shal accuse thee. Eccl. iiij.

Then geue, and geue gladly, geue and geue largelye, for the bread that is geuen wyth a grudging hart, is called stony bread, as Seneca saith, reporting the wordes of Fabius Verrecosus, which are these: Beneficium ab homine duro alpere datum, panis lapidosus est Esurienti accipere cum sit necessarium est tamen acerbus panis. That is to say: the benefite hardly geuen of a hard man, is stonye bread, being then necessary for the poore to take it, because of hys hunger, yet not wythstanding it is but sower bread. Such a geuer in my counsel is nert cousyn to Sathan, for he gaue Christ stones in stæde of breade, but this man geueth the Christian stony bread. Seneca lib. 2. de Beneficijs.

Therefore ye that haue it, be not vnmyndfull of the poore I pray you, and againe, geue

ware to Syrach, for thus he doth teach: Laye vp thy almes in the handes of the poore, and know that what thou kepeſt, in the end thou ſhalt onely leeſe, but that that thou geueſt ſhalbe as a purs about thy necke, as the ſame wiſe man ſaith: For as this life wareth old and our daies paſſe away, ſo ſhal this vayne pelfe paſſe away from vs, neither ſhal riches helpe in the day of vengeaunce, but the corruption abideth which freateth like a canker. Then what ſhal it profit to get all the world, and when the world forſaketh vs, that ſhall be moſt againſt vs, that beſt we loued being in the world. Then in ſatiſfeyng our duty to geue to the poore, is better then to keepe to our ſelues this flitting muckе, euen as Lactantius doth teach vs: Vnuſquiſq; potiorem animam ſuam inducet, quam bona iſta fallacia quorum incerta & caduca eſt poſſeſſio migrant enim multo velocius quam intrauerant & licet vſq; ad vltimum hijs frui liceat alijs tamen relinquende ſunt. That is to ſay: Let euery man perſwade him ſelfe, that his ſoule is better then theſe ſubtill ritches, the poſſeſſion whereof is variable and vncertaine, for they paſſe from vs much more ſwiftly, then they came to vs, and albeit we haue the vſe of them euen til the laſt day, yet at the length

Eccle. 29.

Eccl. xvij.

Rom. xj.

Lactanſ. lib. 7. cap 27.

we muſt leaue them to others. Then I pray thee lay them forth for the profit of your bre-then. Learne to forſake them, before they forſake you. Learne the wiſe counſel of our Sauiour Chriſt, Make thee friendes of the
Luk.xvj. wicked Mammon.

It is marualle to heare how plentifully the Scriptures commaund vs to be mindfull of the poore, beſides that that already hath bene alledged. As in the Prouerbes the wiſe man
Prou.xix. ſaith: He that hath pity on the poore, lendeth to the Lord. And Dauid in the Pſalme
Pſal.xviij deſireth to deliuer the needy from the hand of the ſynner. And Chriſt ſaith: I was hungry
Mat.xxv. and ye gaue me meate &c but how ſlacke all ſtates are in ſatisfyng this duty, with griefe I ſpeake it, & with dread for their negligence they ſhall heare and feele it, when it ſhalbe to late for men to diſſemble their ſtate.

Yet ye geue not, and why ſo? Not becauſe ye haue not wherof ye may geue, but becauſe ye will not let go from you that you may wel ſpare. Power wanteth good will that ſhould be adioyned vnto him. The purſe is able, but the hart is not franke. Needy niggardy cauſeth many to profeſs ſuch a needeles neceſſity, that that is kept from the poore, that profuſe prodigality wilfully doth waſte. Many are

good

good to the poore, as we commonly saye, but they will geue them nought, then I say great boast, and small roast maketh vnsauery mouthes. Yet if woordes will do any good, they shall not want. For it costeth vs nothing to say: alas good soule God helpe thee, God comfort thee, I would we were able to helpe thee. So that they wish wel to them selues in wishing them able, but of such wishing, and to such wishers I say as the Begger to the Bishop is reported to say, that if their wyshings were worth a halfpeny, I doubt they would not be so liberal. Therefore let them leaue wishing, and fal to some doing. Ye locke vp and wil not lose, ye gather together euen the deuil and al, and why? because ye wil hatch the Cockatrice egge. Ye nurce vp a canker for your selues, ye kæpe the packe that shal trouble your viage to God as Christ sayth: O how hard shal it be for a ritch mā to come to heauen, it shal be easier for a Camel to go thorow a needels eye. Ye saith not so because no ritch man shalbe saued, but because the mercyles ritch shalbe damned. Math. 19.

And wil ye know the cause and what letteth that some gene not: Hee geueth not to the poore because he is not reputed in the parish: he withdraweth his hand because he is

not set vp in the church higher, proud hartes and Beggers purses, but wher is that rule and condition prescribed? Hee pleadeth pouerty, and yet sticketh not to bet, pricke, and play at this marke, and that game in wylful expense, with losse of time, twise so much as might wel serue the nede of the poore, and so at length falleth to nede him selfe, and therfore robbeth the poore in dede of the portion to them due, which by Gods prouidence are made poore. Another swylleth excessiuelye his body with drinke, abusing nature, but forgetteth the thirsty and faint harted soule, making his own body a den of dronken Diuels, but others want hys excesse. He turneth away in rollyng of tymber both his thrift and pietie that is commaunded, thereby makyng both wyfe and chyldren beggers. Some in chambering and wantonnes (ye know what I meane) wasteth his body plaged with diseases, and his goods, but no peny for the poore. He casteth to Dogs, that which by nature is created for man, so that al order and honesty, vertue and pietie cleane set aside, euery man followeth his pleasure and filthynes gredely, satisfyng the Prouerbe, euery man for hym selfe. But in the meane whils the stocke of the poore is cleane forgotten. Which thyng

vules

vnles it be mended, I let you to wyt the poꝛe
shal cry, and their voyce shalbe heard: theyꝛ
distresse considered, and our vengeaunce shal
be wꝛought. I tel you truth in Iesus Chꝛist
euen as Dauid sayth in the. 33. Psalme: The Ps. xxxiij
poore crieth vnto the Lord, and he hath herd
them. We are ashamed therfoꝛe of this vn-
thꝛiftynes, of this waste and excessiue ryot.
Open your eares, if not to man, yet to Chꝛist
in his Gospel speaking, who very plentifully
calleth vpon vs to geue and bestow vpon the
poꝛe and nædy. Geue, and it shall be geuen
you, saith he by S. Luke, and that none Luke. vj.
thinke them selues so low that they owe no
part to the poꝛe, he bꝛingeth not onely the
ritch, that of their great aboundance did cast Mar. xij.
into the treasure of the poꝛe, but hee setteth
foꝛth before vs the poꝛe widdowes mite, to
teach vs as Paule saith to geue gladly. Euen
so hee reasoneth wyth the craftye ritch man,
that would know what to do to attaine eter-
nal lyfe. He said: Go sell all that thou hast, Mat. xix.
and geue to the poore, not that it is necessary
foꝛ euery man so to do, oꝛ that a man cannot
be saued except he so do, but thereby teaching
him particularly to lothe the woꝛld, so there-
by vniuersally sheweth vnto all men the care
they owe to the poꝛe. And foꝛ this cause the

holy

holy Apostle prescribeth thys collecting for the poore as a necessary busines and the Sabbathes labour. Not on the Saboth to spend and consume all that the weeke hath before gotten, nor by vnlawful games to prophanat the Saboth, by hunting of tauerne and ale-house to dishonour the Lord of the Saboth, but as becommeth good Christians to make collection for the poore S. Paule willeth saying: Of the gathering for the Saints as I haue ordained in the congregations of Galatia euē so do ye vpon some Sonday, let euery one of you put a side at home, and lay vp whatsoeuer he thinketh meete. He saith not, let euery man waste and spend what he list, but lay vp for the poore that that is meete. For if the rich would once become liberal, there is superfluous inough to helpe the poore and nedy, for nature is soone pleased. I woulde therefore wish, and with my hart I pray, that the hartes of the prosperous might be opened toward the miserable, it is an easy matter, for there wanteth but good wyll, and good vse. Then let the proud leaue his cuts, his pownces, his gardes, and enbrothery, and geue nature euen inough to suffise, and he shal geue the poore a good portion. Let the Gluttō serue nature to suffise, and leaue his surfet, then

1. Cor. xvj

shal

shal the poore be fed, with that that he oftentimes either vomiteth forth, or worketh as a meanes to destroy his life. Let the whoremonger leaue his dalliance, it shall be good for his body, and better for his soule, & his purs shall be the richer to helpe the poore. Let the Artificer sit fast by his calling, then shal he profit the common wealth by his trauel, and he shal haue somewhat to spare to helpe the poore, euen as to this purpose S. Paule exhorteth the Ephesians that eche of them labour with their handes, to obtaine thereby that they may geue to him that hath nede, because we are not borne to our selues, but to our Country, our Parentes, our Brethren and frendes, to do good to al, but specially to the houshold of faith. For amongest al the sacrifices which now the church vseth, as prayse and thankesgeuing to God is the chiefest, so the nexte is to distribute to the nedy Saintes, as the same Paule teacheth the Hebrues saying: To do good and distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Surely of that goods that we keepe in store, we are answerable, but of that we geue to the poore, we are discharged. That that we keepe the rust wil freate like a canker as Iames saith, but that that is layd vp in the bosome of the

Ephe. iiij.

Galat. vj.

Hebr. xiij.

Iacob. v.

poore,

powre, that is discharged, as our Maister hath commaunded. That that we leaue behinde vs the wicked may consume in prodigalitie, but that we geue in the way of Christian liberalitie, shall be rewarded as it is written, Opera eorum sequuntur eos, that is, their workes follow them.

Leue.xxiij

Therefraue not after ritches to get estimation, for thou broughtest nothing into this world, nor set not thine hart vpon vnrighteous Mammon, least thou fall into the temptations and snares of the Deuil, but be merciful to the powre indifferently without respect of persõs. For God as Augustine saith, shal crowne his giftes in thee. Let the Begger be wicked, thou shalt haue thy prayse. Though some make an occupation of it, and accompt of their baules, yet as Paule doth bid thee especially remẽber the houshold of faith, so he doth not deny thee to do good to all.

1.Tim.vi

Feede not your equals, nor the like his like, franke not your selues to fatte to fede the wormes, for as Esay saith: Your pride shal be pluckt to hell, your fat carkases shal fall in the end, the Moth shall freate thee, & the worme and the dust shall couer thee. But when ye may spare to spend and banket your selues, to make your hartes glad, as Christ

Esai.xxbij
Amos.iij.

saith

faith in the Gospel by S. Luke, Then call the poore & impotent, the halt & the blind. &c. Let Herod in his dalliaunce remember hys prisoner Iohn: May rather as good and wise men followe these wyse men that presented pore Christ that was layde in the maunger in pouertye and neede, wyth their golde. When Diues hath dined, let Lazarus haue the crums. Luk. xiiij.

Surely it is a shame to see and knowe the contempt of the pore, especially nowe in the time of the Gospel, when faith should so spred her selfe in our hartes: faith I say that is exercised in loue, that bragging much of faith in wordes, do not correspondantly answer the same in deede. We can loke vpon the quauering carkas that lyeth ful cold, and we say, God helpe thee, and sende thee warmth, but where is our helpe? Yet they are our flesh, so that in contemning them we leaue our deuty vndone, and verifie Iames in his saying: If a brother or sister be naked and in neede, wanting their dayly foode, and some of you shal say to them, go thy way in peace, God sende you warmth and clothing, meate and drinke, and shall not geue them the thinges that are necessary for their bodies, what shal it profit them? Surely a good faith that onely is foūd Iacob. ij.

in the good Christian, it alwaies is exercised, but euery tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is cut downe and cast to the fire. It is not inough onelye to beare leaues, but we must also bring forth our frygs, or els the lord Jesus shal curse vs.

Then this is to be learned, that none contemne or despise the poore, but that euery mã according to his abilitie helpe them, and consider of them as Dauid sayth. So that neyther the ritch in defyng the poore say, away with this Begger, go whip me this slaue, this kincking rascal, this lousy wretch, being his own image: neither on the other side none say, I am so poore I cannot help, I nede help my selfe, for God loueth glad hartes & cheerful geuers. For except it be the poore in dede to whom we must geue, ther is no such want but that they may geue somwhat as Fulgentius sayth: Dare elimosinam omnibus est possibile si adsit bona voluntas: Omnibus facile si non adsit dira cupiditas, omnibus salubre si ferueat charitas cunctis debet esse commune vt omnibus detur eterna felicitas. He sayth: It is possible for all men to geue almes, if all men haue good will therunto He saith it is an easy thing for all men to do, if cruel couetousnes be not present. He saith it is wholesome for

1. Cor. ix.

Fulgentius sermone de confessoribꝰ

for all men, if charity be feruent; and he saith it should be common to al men, that al might obtaine eternal felicitie, not in respect of the gift, as I haue said before, but for the promis sake as Christ saith by S. Mathew: He that shal geue to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in my name, he shal not loose his rewarde. Mtth. x. Mar. ix.

Geue we must to satisfie Gods ordinance, wherto he hath ordained vs, as the same Fulgence saith: for God hath ordained Quod demus, cur demus, & quibus demus, that is: he hath ordained the thing that we must geue, a cause why we should geue, and his creatures to whom we should geue. Therefore in respect of the first that he hath ordained things to geue, that must needes be applied to the ordinaunce wherefore it was made, or els we commit sinne in abusing Gods ordinaunce. Then secondly in that there is cause to geue, euen the will of God prescribing the same, Gods ordaining wyl must be satisfied, or els we commit sinne. Last of al for that he hath ordained to whom we should geue beside sa nor, that riseth by loue, in duty we are bound to geue them the portion that God hath appointed for them, ordaining things for them, & ordaining them also to enioy those thinges. Fulgentius de confessorib.

as ordaining riches and riche men, to helpe the poore in their pouertie.

Which were an easy matter, if there were a forward good will and readynes: For the number of the poore be nothing comperable to the number of the riche and wealthy. So that in this contourse of people if euery one would do but a litle, it might be an easy matter to helpe the poore. An easy matter I say, if we folow Chrysostomes counsel, who saith thus: Gratia Dei centum millia hominum huc conuenire opinor, quorum singuli si vnũ panem quotidie paupertati offerrent, omnes certe pauperes abbundarent: si vnum quisq; obulum solum modo, nemo penitus indigeret. Whose wordes in English are these: I suppose, that by the grace of God, there is resorted to this place one hundred thousands men, of which number if euery one would daily geue but one peece of bread, all the poore might abound, if euery man would geue but one halfepeny, none should want.

Chryso. homeli. 87 in capi. Mat. 26.

And may not I saye so to you my countrye men, as Chrysostome did to his: Is ther not as great multitudes and concourse of people now, as euer was then? The matter being so small that is required, me thinke it is great impietie if it be denied. If ye be moued

to geue

to geue more, God bleſſe that motion, & moue ye ſo ſtil: if not, yet geue this ſmall requeſt. Rule thy peny I pray thee, let it not rule thee, for one of theſe twoo offices muſt it needes haue, either ſubiection or gouernment; as the Poet Horace ſaith: Imperat aut ſeruit collecta pecunia cuiq́, That is to ſay. Horace.

The mony that gredely is gathered together,
Either ruleth, or is ruled I know not wel whether

Then I ſay once againe geue, that it maye be knowen that ye gouerne, and do not obey, for in keping ye ſeeme moſt manifeſtly to be gouerned. Againe, leaſt thou go from thy riches before thou haſt done good with them, ſo heape together I pray thee, that thou mayeſt wel ſcatter, and ſo paſſes I beſeech thee, that thou know to geue forth. For the time muſt come that thou muſt leaue al, when thou haſt caught and ſcraped together what thou canſt as Martial in his verſe doth truly ſay: Rape, congere, aufer, poſſide, relinquendum eſt. Martial.

Catch and heape vp, filch and poſſes:
Yet muſt thou forſake Mammon remedileſs.

But what ſhould I ſpeake of Chriſoſtomes counſell, or vſe mine own perſwaſion, or inſert the verſes of Poets, when as there are

good

gods and godly lawes appointed for the same in this Realme of England: as ceasements in parishes, and Collectors for the same, forfaits for absence from the parish church, and Sidemen for the same, and such others ordayned by authoritie for the comfort of the poore. But how lewdly this is looked vnto, it appeareth in the treasure of the poore, for euery mã plucketh his necke out of the yoke, and no man asked why so: the forfaites is neuer asked, be absent who wyl. Thus conscience is careles and lyeth a sleeps, regarding neither duty towardes the poore, nor vowe towardes God, neither worldly shame and impryse for their negligẽce, nor the answer they haue to make for the poore: neyther the crye of them that liue for a time, nor the iudgement of him that lyueth for euer. And this is the cause of the want of the poore.

Yea more then that (such is their remedyles care) doe riche as Amos saith, make hauock of the poore, in buying them for old shoes. Amos.ij. May they will buy them and sel them out of doores. They are good to the poore as they say, but they wil geue them nothing, & thus the poore are robbed, God amend the euyll.

I might apply histories, the reportes of good & godly men y̆ wer marueilous beneficial to the

the poore, but what should Christians in the time of the exhorting and commaũding Gospel vse the counsell of stories to teache them that which God in his woord commaundeth them, which might be easely satisfied if Dives would leaue his daintye dishes, and leaue to be Epicurus fellow. If pride would looke vpon pouerty, if Venus would not so couple her selfe with Seres and Baccus, if godly piety and pitye might once enter into our stonye mindes, if liberality might once kil couetous, if ritch men could commaunde the peny that commaũdeth them, which God once graunt.

Surely amongest al the exercises of Christianitie, ther is none more fit for a Christian nor more semelye, then large liberalitye towardes al, and pure pity towardes the poore. And therefore the stories reporte of Halena Quœne of the Albanes, a most memorable report, that is this, that she being called to the faith of Christ, and so baptised in the raygne of Cladius Cæsar, the.v. yeare, great famine oppressing the people in Syria, she of her own cost prepared great store of corne, and sent it them. A notable example to moue Christians in necessitie to pity the poore. But Helena is dead and loses, who was called Barsabas, he is also gone. Flores histor. lib. 1.

Cons-

Consider their nede ye wealthye worldlinges that would be content with hungrye chaps to chaw, and with lanke bellies to deuour that that ye wastefullye neglect, beyng ordayned for the poore, & not to be cast either to the Dog or dunghil. Regard their trauel, their slauish seruice and drudgery, thinke on their toile and comfort them. Let Christians learne a lesson of the Heathen Orator Tully who saith thus: Multa vilia & seruilia negotia liberos homines ac ingenuos paupertas agere cogit, ob que potius misericordiam quã interitum demerentur. Pouertie (saith he) compelleth many a good and honest man to take in hand vile and slauishe businesses, for which cause they deserue mercy and succour, rather then destruction. O thinke if ye were in their poore state, how glad ye woulde be of a smal refreshing, which nowe to them full slackly ye do shew.

Cicero ex appellatione cõtra Eubulidem,

Therfore let me entreate you with Dauid the Prophet, O ye ritch men, consider your duty, remember the poore, and of your satiety fill their emptines: Ye that eate til ye blow, and feede til your eyes swel with fatnes, that taste first your course meates, and then fal to your fine, that drincke the colde drinkes for your stomackes that are hot, a cup of claret

wine

wine, some ale or beere to laye a foundation, then eate till to much make vs blow, & then a good carowse to make good digestion, a cup of sack for the stomacke that is cold, it is good at midlemeale say some, this & that ye haue, and I know not what the prodigal waster licentiously doth spend, which with thankesgeuing vnto satiety God hath created for you. Ye I say that liue in this excesse with superfluity, haue some remorse to the poore in their miserye, that God maye blesse ye as Dauid saith, which he shal surely do, as the text doth shew, for such shall be deliuered in the time of trouble, that so shal do. And thus much of the first part.

Now must I speake a little of the second, which I shal not neede to stande long about, because the scriptures plentifully teache the same, & experience doth proue it. But what shall we haue for helping the poore? Surely blessing in this world, honor and deliuerance from trouble, as Dauid saith, and retribution in the life to come, and their workes shal follow them. Yea and Dauid in thys Psalme, enlarging the benefites by ennumeration declareth them saying: The Lord shall preserue him and keepe him aliue, that he maye be blessed, and deliuer not thou hym into the

Reue. xiiij.

Psal. xli.

handes of his enemies.

Againe, our Prophet expresseth well the promis graũted to the man that considereth
Psal. cxij. the powre and needy, saying: He hath dispersed abroad, and geuen to the poore, his righteousnes remaineth for euer, his horne shall
Snoigodã in psa. 112 be exalted with glory. Which wordes Snoigodane interpreting sayth thus: Dispersit amore Dei non thesaurisauit sibi: Dedit pauperibus non histrionibus aut adulatoribus: Iustitia eius & merces misericordie manet in seculum seculi, quia præmium erit eternum. Which wordes englished are thus: He hath geuen to the powre, not vnto wicked rakehels and flatterers, his righteousnes, and the reward of his mercye remaineth for euer, because the reward is eternal in heauen. By which wordes Snoigodane teacheth wel vpõ whom we shall bestow that we may spare, and who ought not to haue. Then it remaineth that we spend not vpõ Dogs & Beares as some do, to satisfie their mercyelesse pleasure, to see two cruel creaturs teare one the other: not vpon cardes and dice as some others do: not vpon excesse of apparel & fare as some do: not vpon fensing and dauncing to please the flesh: not vpon varlets and parasites, those fawning dogs, the Catterpillers

of the

of the poore, but vpon the godly and the vertuous poore, for that is the gift that hath the promise of reward annexed vnto it.

The wordes of Tobias whom I haue proposed to be a maister of mercy and pity, may also be applied in this matter, to testify vnto you the reward that followeth the same, as he writeth in these woordes saying: Those that exercise almes and righteousnes, shal be filled with lyfe. So that if they haue not a long rase here on the earth, yet shal they surely liue with God for euer in a far better life. Tobi. xij.

Then O deare Christians count it not lost that is geuen to the poore, as some do, supposing it is cast away that is geuē to those stinking rascals, but rather thinke and knowe that it is the portion that of all thy goodes is best bestowed. For loke what thou kæpest, thou shalt lose, but that the poore hath, thou kæpest for thy self. Remember the good captaine Cornelius, whose memory is registred in the Actes, to whom the Angel appearing in a vision said thus: Cornelius, thy prayer and thine almes is come vp before God. Lo here the reward, and also of whom thou shalt be rewarded. Actes x.

Beleue therfore and know, that the riche God willeth ye to lay forth nothing for your

which he wil not recompence: and as ye beleue so practise to geue to the poore, for ye shal haue neuer the lesse, your basket neuer the emptier, nor your store the poorer. Loke vpon the widdow of Sarepta, litle was her prouision God knoweth, and smal was her store when the poore Prophet came to her to aske her bread. To whom she said, I haue nothing
3. Reg. 17 but a litle flower in a barrel, and a litle oyle in a cruise, which notwithstanding she bestowed vpon him. And what folowed then? forsoth her barrel was filled with flower, and her pot with oyle. Surely, the plentye that commeth by the poore is much, as Augustine saith: Fecundus est ager pauperum cito redit
August. donantibus fructum, that is: The fielde of
in psal. the poore is fruitful, it surrendreth againe the fruit with spade to them that geue ought, yea
Mar. x. if it be but a cup of cold water, sayth our Sauiour Iesus Christ.

The blessed Apostle S. Paule specifieth the promise annexed to the exercise of almes, in his Epistle to the Hebrues, saying thus: God
Hebr. vj. is not vnrighteous that he wyll forget your workes of loue, which ye haue shewed to the Saintes for his names sake, which haue ministred to the Saintes, and yet do minister. The confirmation wherof Christ in these wordes

expres-

expresseth saying: Blessed are the mercyfull, Matth. 5.
for they shall obtayne mercy.

To conclude, how many blessinges in sundry sort promised (which he can and wil performe that hath promised them) are set down for them that are pitiful to the poore, the scriptures do testifie, which shoulde be to long to recite. Yea and nature in flesh and bloud is not able to reache to the knowledge of them, for that they be celestial in the kingdome, according to the promise infallible, which by expresse wordes are declared in S. Mathewes Gospel in these words: I was hungry, and ye gaue me meate, thirsty, and ye gaue me drink &c. therfore enter into the kingdome prepared for ye from the beginning of the worlde. What reb

So then that not onely many terrestrial benefites to enritch vs, here are promised in recompence, but those, that as I cannot repeate them, so vnworthely we haue them promysed for any thing we do, but because our gracious God hath promised, we shal surely enioy them. The multitude wherof, the height & depth whereof, the price and beuty whereof, the fame and dignitie wherof no toung hath spoken, no more can myne: no pen hath written, therefore must I stay mine: no hart hath conceaued, yet may we beleue, such glory hath

our

our gratious Maister prepared for his faithful Stuardes in that his kingdome that our Christ speaketh of. Unto which kingdome God the Father, by the mediation of Jesus Christ bring vs al, to whom with the holy Goost be all glory and honour now and euer.

AMEN.

¶ A praier which the same Henrye Bedell vseth euerye

Sunday and Holy day after his Sermons, in the said Christes Church.

O Deare GOD our heauenly father, heare our praiers for Christes sake, & lay not our syns to our charge to punish them, and to take vengeaunce on them, but rather in the bloude of Jesus Christ blot them forth. We haue deserued thine anger, we confes, but yet in Christes blood we know thou art wel pleased, in whose name we cry vnto thée, O saue vs from our enemies, that seeke vs and our bloud for thy Gospels sake. O let not the wicked say, where is now their God? but let vs rather say, the Lordes right hand hath brought mightye thinges to passe,

our

our God shall laugh our enemies to scorne. Therefore heare vs deare GOD, and for thy mercies sake saue thy worthy seruaunt Elizabeth our most gratious Quéne. Graūt her we pray thée peace and safetie from all her enemies, geue her the blessings of peace, and a royal courage, whereby through thine assistance she may confound all her foes, and not to feare what man can do vnto her. Let her be comforted with thy swéete mercies, lay not our synnes vnto her charge, nor suffer not her life to be plaged for our synnes and wickednes, but kéepe her (O Lord) to be thine own, and blesse her wyth long lyfe and happy dayes. Make her an old mother of this cōmon wealth, and graunt her a long and prosperous raigne ouer vs in thy godly peace. Remember (O Lord) her gratious Councellers, and behold them with thy fatherly eye. Geue them thy feare, to set forth thy will, and graunt them the spirit of wysdome, and the counsels of peace. The Bishops and Pastors O Lord, direct and make them faythfull in gatherung thy haruest, to breake the bread of life in time conuenient, that thy Church may be builded of lyuelye stones. And blesse thy people O Father of might, open their hartes to receiue the dewe

of

of grace, that the sede of thy word may sinck into them. Geue them O Lord, the spirit of obedience and true humility towardes thy word, and their Prince. Cast downe thyne eye frō thy throne aboue, behold our Realms and Country, and preserue it by thy myght, from ciuill foes, and from forayne myght, from Turke and Pope, and al popish power, that all the world may see and knowe that thou art our GOD. Finally we pray thee, at thy good wyl, in thy appointed time, open the eyes of the blinde, and conuert the hard harted, that they may come to thy truth and be saued. Teach them to know thy word, that once we may be one flocke, in one pure faith, vnto one Christ. Confound Sathan & his members, Antichrist and hys religion, geue thy Gospell a ioyfull and free passage, geue all thy people the freedome of conscience and peace in Christ, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BRITISH 12 JY 86

¶ Imprinted at London by John Awdely, dwelling in lytle Britaine streete without Aldersgate. 1572.

(.)